

SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR FORWARDING ELECTRONIC MESSAGES

This application is a continuation-in-part of the following applications: Ser. 09/629,909, titled SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR FORWARDING ELECTRONIC MESSAGES, filed July 31, 2000; Ser. 09/629,911, titled DYNAMIC ELECTRONIC FORWARDING SYSTEM, filed July 31, 2000; Ser. 09/629,904, titled E-MAIL FORWARDING SYSTEM HAVING ARCHIVAL DATABASE, filed July 31, 2000; Ser. 09/648,576, titled REMOTE E-MAIL FORWARDING SYSTEM, filed August 28, 2000; Ser. 09/751,490, titled SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CLEANSING ADDRESSES FOR ELECTRONIC MESSAGES, filed December 28, 2000; and Ser. 09/750,952, titled SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR CLEANSING ADDRESSES FOR ELECTRONIC MESSAGES, filed December 28, 2000. The disclosures for each of the applications listed above are hereby expressly incorporated by reference.

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FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to a system and method for forwarding electronic messages, and more particularly, relates to forwarding e-mail messages intended to be initially delivered to an obsolete or disfavored address to a chosen forwarding address associated with the obsolete or disfavored e-mail address.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Recent advances in telecommunications networks have drastically altered the manner in which people interact and conduct business. These advances promote efficiency and convenience in one's ability to receive important information. With this in mind, individuals and businesses today find that their physical and electronic addresses are changing faster than ever with increased mobility and competing message delivery services. Deregulation and privatization of the global postal systems, competing package delivery services, and rapid growth of multiple competing electronic mail (e-mail) systems are creating an environment in which there is no single point of contact for address correction as there was when the sole messaging provider was the national postal service.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The above and other objects and advantages of the present invention will become more readily apparent upon consideration of the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with accompanying drawings, in which like reference characters refer to like parts throughout the drawings and in which:

Fig. 1 depicts an electronic e-mail messaging system embodying the present invention;

Figs. 2 and 3 depict flowcharts depicting the operation of the present invention;

Fig. 4 depicts a look-up table used by the present invention;

Figs. ^{5A - 5C}~~5A and 5B~~ depict e-mail messages illustrating the operability of the e-mail messaging system of Fig. 1.

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Fig. 6 depicts a look-up table having dynamic parameters in accordance with the present invention;

Fig. 7 depicts a flow chart illustrating the steps taken by the present invention e-mail forwarding system for archiving requests for forwarding undeliverable e-mail.

Fig. 8 depicts a flowchart illustrating the operation of the present invention including the blocking feature for forwarding e-mail;

Fig. 9 depicts an alternative embodiment electronic of the e-mail messaging system of the present invention;

Fig. 10a and 10b depict the method of operation for the e-mail messaging system of Fig. 9;

Fig. 11 depicts an embodiment for automatic directing of undeliverable messages to the e-mail forwarding system; and

Fig. 12 depicts an embodiment for forwarding of messages to an employee who is the successor to an employee with a disfavored e-mail address.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Preferred Environment

FIG. 1 schematically depicts a conventional INTERNET telecommunications system 10. The FIG. 1 system is exemplary in nature. The present invention can be